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Mayor's Round Table on Alternative Energy brings together experts and ideas to strategically move forward

How alternative energy initiatives can fuel the local and regional economy and enhance community sustainability was the focus of the Mayor's Round Table held this morning. Identifying opportunities and providing recommendations on specific implementation options formed the basis of the discussion among 18 Round Table members invited to come together to share their knowledge and expertise in various aspects of alternative energy resources and technologies.

"Some have called sustainable energy the greatest economic opportunity of the future. By bringing together sector leaders to brainstorm ideas and share experiences, we will find new ways to develop and market sustainable energy solutions for the future," says Mayor Anne Marie DeCicco-Best. "As we continue to collaborate with regional partners to promote economic development strategies, we must also ensure efficient and responsible energy use is part of the plan."

"London and the Southwest region of the province have a large number of diverse, newly developed, alternative energy and conventional producers," says Mohan Mathur, Chair of the Round Table and former Dean of Engineering at Western. "Therefore, searching, developing and selecting environmentally responsible energy solutions are strategic opportunities not to be missed."

At today's session, a commitment was made to establish a Mayor's Sustainable Energy Council representing a minimum of 12 people. It will be set up by the fall with leadership from the City of London, the University of Western Ontario and LEDC. The Council's mandate will focus on three areas:1) Projects for Today, including a sustainability/conservation audit; a Union Gas/London Hydro conservation management program; and a review of building standards with all levels of government; 2) Projects for Tomorrow to focus on initiatives currently underway in the industry, which can be supported and championed by the Council. One example is the integration of renewable resources with conventional fuels; and 3) Projects for the Future with an emphasis on reviewing new technologies being developed around the world.

As part of its mandate, the Council is committed to holding a public forum to search out new ideas from the community and industry that can be implemented as part of the strategy.

Today's alternative energy session is the first in a series of four Mayor's Round Tables to address issues important to London and to complement the City's work in the Southwest Economic Assembly. Announced by the Mayor in her January State of the City Address, three more emerging sector topics will be covered in 2007: life sciences, agrifood and advanced manufacturing. For more information on the Mayor's Round Table series, please visit ***www.london.ca***.